

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A system and method for detecting digital symbols carried in a received optical signal. The system comprises a functional element operative to receive a stream of  
5 samples of an electrical signal derived from the received optical signal and to evaluate a non-linear function of each received sample, thereby to produce a stream of processed samples. The system also comprises a detector operative to render decisions about individual symbols present in the received optical signal on the basis of the stream of processed samples. In an embodiment, the non-linear function  
10 computes substantially the square root of each received sample.